drugs and pharmaceuticals by Rs. 100 crores a year;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal; and

(c) by when the Group is likely to be constituted ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government propose to constitute a group consisting of representatives of the industry and concerned Departments under the Government to explore the possibility of increasing export of drugs and pharmaceuticals. Orders regarding constitution of the group will be issued in due course.

Amendments in the laws relating to beedi industry

2800. SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to amend the laws relating to beedi industry so as to prescribe stringent punishment for violation of these laws and to give wider legal protection to the workers engaged in this industry;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA :: (a) and (b) A Bill to amend the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976 in order to enable the Central Government to frame rules regarding penalties for employers who do not issue identity cards to Beedi workers is under the consideration of the Government.

(c) Does not arise.

Government borrowings from International bodies

2801. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to scale down its borrowings from international bodies; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI) : (a) No, Sir. However, the Government have been following a cautious policy of external borrowings so as to ensure that its debt servicing liability is kept within prudent limits.

(b) Does not arise.

News item captioned "Not juts honoured—they want an honourable life"

2802. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item captioned "Not juts honours—they want an honourable life" which appeared in the Hindustan Times of the 18th October, 1986;

(b) whether Government propose to start a pension scheme or provide some financial assistance at nominal rate of interest to the craft persons who are recipients of 'National Awards'; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if no such proposal is under Government's consideration what other steps Government propose to take to provide relief to such persons ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government have a pension scheme for the mastercraftsmen. Under the scheme, craftsmen who are National or State Award winners and 60 years of age or above with income not exceeding Rs. 3500/- per annum are eligible to get pension at the rate of Rs. 300/- p.m. The recipients of National and State Awards are also assisted financially under the Apprenticeship Training Scheme where they impart training in crafts requiring specialised skill.

Setting up of a Regional Institute of Meteorology in India

2803. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether SAARC countries have agreed to set up a Regional Institute of Meteorology in India; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The functions of the Centre will include :

(i) Developing techniques for medium range and long range weather prediction, particularly to meet the agricultural requirements of the region, using numerical, statistical and synoptic methods;

(ii) Undertaking research relevant to weather prediction and better understanding of various aspects of monsoon and tropical meteorology particularly the interannual variability of monsoon and its rainfall;

(iii) Compiling climatological information for the region of utility to weather forecasting and agricultural activities;

(iv) Organising special observations or observing periods for monitoring special features of atmospheric circulations. Collecting their data and undertaking research on them;

(v) Evaluating the economic benefits derived through research input from the Centre for the improvement in weather forecasts and advising Member countries on the optimal utilization of outputs from RMRC.

The details regarding the budget and functioning of the proposed Centre are in the process of being worked out.

Import of pharmaceuticals and industrial goods by New Zealand

2804. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVIND RAO PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether New Zealand has agreed to import pharmaceuticals and industrial goods from India; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI) : (a) New Zealand has indicated interest in the import of pharmaceuticals and industrial goods from India.

(b) During the discussions between Commerce Minister and the New Zealand Minister for Overseas Trade and Marketing during the latter's visit to New Delhi in March 1986, the Indian side had indicated its interest in the export of pharmaceuticals and industrial goods from India. The New Zealand Minister while taking note of our interest had indicated that they were looking at the prospects of importing pharmaceuticals and surgical equipments from India.

Effect of date of implementation of Fourth Pay Commission recommendations on pay fixation of employees

2805. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government have given a certificate in the Explanatory Memorandum attached to the Central Civil Services (Revised Pay) Rules, 1986 that the retrospective effect given to these rules which the Pay Commission has recommended i.e. from 1st April, 1986 to November, 1986 will not affect adversely any employee to whom these rules apply;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the employees have been given the chance to opt for revised scales w.e.f. 1st January, 1986 or from the date of next increment; and

(c) if so, whether the instructions issued by the C&AG that employees will not be given the benefit of 20 per cent of basic pay to be included for fixation of pay in the revised scale are not contradictory to Explanatory Memorandum, as the employees whose increment fall between the period 1st January, 1986 to 1st April, 1986 are adversely affected ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI) : (a) to (c) The Central Civil Services (Revised Pay) Rules, 1986, notified on 13-9-86, have been given retrospective operation w.e.f. 1-1-86, with the stipulation that such retrospective